REMARKS

Applicants cancel claim 3. Claims 1-2 and 4-12 remain pending in the application. Applicants amend claim 1 to incorporate features that correspond to those of claim 3 and for clarification. Applicants refer to page 8, line 16 to page 9, line 27 of the specification for an exemplary embodiment of and support for the claimed invention. No new matter has been added.

Claims 1-2 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over European Patent Application Publication No. EP 0991231 to Clauberg in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,982,975 to Aramaki et al.; claim 3 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Clauberg in view of Aramaki et al., and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,788,699 to Yoshikawa. Applicants amend claim 1 to incorporate features that correspond to claim 3 and for clarification. Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejections.

The Examiner conceded that Clauberg and Aramaki et al. fail to disclose the claimed buffer threshold features, and relied upon Yoshikawa as a combining reference that allegedly suggests these features. In particular, the Examiner cited the description in col. 2, lines 10-25 of Yoshikawa of a conventional output buffer threshold "back pressure" technique as alleged suggestion of the claimed threshold features. Such portion of Yoshikawa only includes, however, description of a "back pressure" technique where

> "...when the number of cells staying in an output buffer exceeds this threshold value, the relevant output buffer sends a back pressure signal to all the input buffers 122-1 to 122-8. The input buffers 122-1 to 122-8 temporarily stop sending cells addressed to an output circuit corresponding to the output buffer sending a back pressure signal..." Col. 2, lines 16-22 of Yoshikawa. (Emphasis added)

Thus, the cited portion of Yoshikawa, again, only includes description of a buffer back pressure control technique where an output buffer sends a back pressure signal to stop cells addressed to the particular output circuit corresponding to the output buffer sending the

back pressure signal from being sent from the input buffers in order to prevent cells addressed to that particular output circuit from being discarded at the corresponding output buffer in case the output buffer overflows. Thus, such portion of Yoshikawa does not include any disclosure or suggestion of redistributing a packet to an output buffer with a low load when the amount of data accumulated in another output buffer exceeds its threshold.

And correspondingly, even assuming, arguendo, that it would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time the claimed invention was made to combine Clauberg, Aramaki et al., and Yoshikawa, such a combination would still have failed to disclose or suggest,

> "[a] packet processing apparatus, comprising:
> a distributor for assigning a sequence number to each of a plurality of packets input to said distributor and distributing the packets;
> a plurality of packet analyzing units for realizing parallel execution of information analyzing processes on the packets distributed from the distributor; and
> an order correction unit for receiving the packets from the packet analyzing units, rearranging the packets in order according to the sequence number assigned to each of the packets, and outputting the packets in the rearranged order, wherein
> the distributor includes a plurality of output buffers corresponding to the packet analyzing units to which output buffers the packets are distributed,
> the distributor sets a threshold value of an amount of accumulated data in each of the output buffers; and
> when the amount of accumulated data in at least one output buffer of the output buffers exceeds the threshold value, the distributor refrains from distributing the packets to said at least one output buffer and ***redistributes the packets to the output buffers other than said at least one output buffer***," as recited in claim 1. (Emphasis added)

Advantageously, the claimed invention provides for averaging out the loads of output buffers and, thus, enabling an efficient and high speed packet forwarding process.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1, together with claim 2 dependent therefrom, is patentable over Clauberg, Aramaki et al., and Yoshikawa, separately and in combination, for at least the foregoing reasons.

Claims 4-5 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Clauberg in view of Aramaki et al., and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 7,085,274 to Rahim et al.; claim 6 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Clauberg in view of Aramaki et al., Rahim et al., and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,825,436 to Kobayashi et al.; claim 7 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Clauberg in view of Aramaki et al., Rahim et al., and further in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0112798 to Ziegler et al.; claim 8 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Clauberg in view of Aramaki et al., Rahim et al., Ziegler et al., and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,612,953 to Olnowich; claims 9-11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Clauberg in view of Aramaki et al., and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,553,000 to Ganesh et al.; and claim 12 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Clauberg in view of Aramaki et al., Ganesh et al., and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,993,031 to Murase.

The Examiner cited and relied upon Rahim et al., Kobayashi et al., Ziegler et al., Olnowich, Ganesh et al., and Murase as additional combining references to specifically address the additional features recited in dependent claims 4-12. As such, the further combinations of these references would still have failed to cure the above-described deficiencies of Clauberg, Aramaki et al., and Yoshikawa with respect to base claim 1, even assuming, arguendo, that such further combinations would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time the claimed invention was made. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully

submit that claims 4-12 are patentable over the cited references for at least the foregoing reasons.

In view of the remarks set forth above, this application is in condition for allowance which action is respectfully requested. However, if for any reason the Examiner should consider this application not to be in condition for allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned attorney at the number listed below prior to issuing a further Action.

Any fee due with this paper may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-1290.

Respectfully submitted,

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